



National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration

Educational Partnership Program

With

Minority Serving institutions

Graduate Research and Training Scholarship Program

Program Manual

March 2015

NOAA EDUCATIONAL PARTNERSHIP PROGRAM with MINORITY SERVING INSTITUTIONS (EPP/MSI) GRADUATE RESEARCH & TRAINING SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM (GRTSP)

The National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) Graduate Research and Training Scholarship Program (GRTSP) is a pilot program designed to provide opportunities for graduate students supported at the Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions (EPP/MSI) Cooperative Science Centers. Scholars to participate in experiential opportunities at a NOAA facility with guidance from a NOAA mentor.

About the NOAA Graduate Research and Training Scholarship Pilot Program

The NOAA Graduate Research and Training Scholarship Program (GRTSP) leverages the initial investment made by the agency in the NOAA EPP/MSI Cooperative Science Centers (CSC). GRTSP is intended to help establish a pipeline of well trained and educated individuals who attend Minority Serving Institutions, and earn degrees in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) disciplines that support NOAA's mission.

The EPP/MSI supports NOAA succession planning efforts and helps to diversify the human capital in NOAA and the nation's science, technology, resource management and policy workforce. The program supports outstanding graduate students in NOAA-supported fields who are pursuing research-based masters and doctoral degrees at accredited academic institutions that are NOAA Cooperative Science Centers (CSC).

GRTSP scholars have a unique opportunity to become engaged in NOAA mission research activities collaborating with NOAA scientists and managers at a NOAA facility when selected. Scholars' graduate education will be enhanced with real world experiential training that would contribute to an innovation with 21st century workplace competencies. NOAA also benefits from this scholarship program by ensuring that graduate education at EPP/MSI CSC institutions are responding to current and future needs of the agency.

GRTSP scholars are expected to contribute to research, teaching, and innovations in STEM disciplines, building upon the capacity developed at the CSCs and to further strengthen the partnerships created with NOAA over the past 15 years. The scholarship is competitive, and students are nominated by their respective Center Director. CSC students interested in applying for a GRTSP award should request an application from their respective Center Director.

Stipend:

Scholars are offered the following stipend for one year based on the degree being pursued.

For PhD. Degree candidates:

- \$45,000 stipend to support tuition and fees and other costs associated with opportunities for professional development;
- \$10,000 (maximum) travel cost to support research travel and to present findings at conferences; and,
- Funding for a second year of training if a renewal application is successful and approved by NOAA EPP/MSI.

For Masters Degree candidates:

- \$36,000 to support tuition and fees as well as other costs associated with opportunities for professional development; and,
- \$7,000 (maximum) travel cost to support research travel and to present findings at conferences.

How to Apply

Eligibility Requirements:

Applicants must be currently enrolled as a full time student at one of NOAA's EPP/MSI Cooperative Science Centers in an accredited graduate degree program. In addition applicants must meet the following criteria:

- Minimum GPA 3.5 or above for the duration of GRTSP financial support;
- US Citizenship;
- Undergraduate degree in STEM;
- Enrolled in a MS or PhD program and matriculated in STEM discipline that directly supports NOAA's mission;
- Must have completed 1 academic term of graduate coursework;
- Applications will be accepted twice per year;
- Each CSC may submit up to 4 applications during the open season;
- Completed application are submitted online to NOAA EPP/MSI;
- Applications must include a Project Plan with Milestones along with 3 letters of recommendation – one from the Center Director and another from the NOAA mentor; and,
- Applications may be obtained from the NOAA Cooperative Science Center Director and are submitted through the CSC Director directly to NOAA EPP/MSI.

Application Evaluation

- NOAA's EPP/MSI Scholarship Team conducts an initial administrative review of all applications to determine compliance with requirements and completeness of the applications. Only complete applications that meet all eligibility requirements, described under the Eligibility Requirements, will be considered for a merit review. Applications identified as incomplete or that do not meet the eligibility requirements will be deemed ineligible.
- All complete and eligible scholarship applications undergo a review by a panel of scientific experts in the areas of study related to the EPP/MSI GRTSP application. Panel members rate applications based on the evaluation criteria described below.
- Applications are evaluated by a 3-member review panel on the following criteria:
 1. Does the application address a priority area of the NOAA Line Office? (20%)
 2. Are the proposed plan and methodologies technically sound and likely to produce results that support NOAA, and the specific LO mission? (20%)
 3. Is the timeframe adequate to meet the proposal objectives? (10%)
 4. Is the collaboration outlined in the application adequate to achieve the desired results? (10%)
 5. Does the proposed partnership with the NOAA facility lend itself to successful collaboration between the student, an identified NOAA mentor, the academic partner institution and NOAA? (10%)
 6. Does the project plan and statement of career interest support NOAA's mission? (20%).
 7. Do the recommendations and references support the application? (10%).

Final GRTSP selections are made by the NOAA EPP/MSI managers.

Program requirements:

Duration - 1 year support for MS and 2 years of support for Ph.D. students. (Minimum rotation per internship experience is **3 continuous** months per year)

Students select from the Scholars opportunities developed by NOAA scientists and managers (mentors) and submitted through the EPP SSIO; or, NOAA mentor along with the student and academic advisor/Center Director develop a discrete research internship activity that may be completed in 1 or 2 years. The internship research opportunity will serve as the basis for a thesis or dissertation and is expected to make a meaningful contribution to the NOAA mission through the internship at the lab or program office.

Reporting: Scholars are required to submit two performance reports per year. The mid-year report is submitted six months after the award start date and a final report 2 weeks after the end of the award period. Both reports must be submitted to the NOAA program office from the Center Director. Progress reports must include the signature of both the scholar's academic adviser and NOAA mentor.

Transcripts: Twice a year the scholar is required to submit a transcript to the NOAA GRTSP program office to verify the student is registered as a full time student and is maintaining the required 3.5 GPA

Evaluations: Two evaluations will be conducted that contribute to the student's grade during the scholarship/internship period.

- Scholars complete an evaluation on the internship at the end of the experience
- NOAA mentor completes an evaluation of the fellow and provides same to academic advisor and NOAA GRTSP program manager.
- NOAA mentor also provides feedback to the program office on program administration on an annual basis.

Scholar responsibilities:

Scholars are required to develop and maintain ongoing campus engagement with their CSC Director, academic adviser and NOAA mentor for the duration of the scholarship award while maintaining full time status as a student. Scholars are not allowed to hold full time outside employment while receiving GRTSP funds and must meet the following requirements:

- Present results of research to the NOAA community via One NOAA science seminar;
- Attend and present research results at, a minimum, one national conference;
- Present research results at the NOAA facility where the scholar's experiential opportunity is conducted;
- Present research to faculty and peers at scholar's respective CSC; and
- Mentor other CSC students through center activities.

Appointments

GRTSP scholars are appointed for a maximum of one academic year. All appointments are terminated automatically at the end of the period for which they are effective. GRTSP scholars may hold only the equivalent of one full-time appointment at a time. The GRTSP scholarship satisfies the requirement of one full-time appointment. Students are not expected to hold any other employment during a GRTSP scholarship award tenure.

To be eligible for appointment as a GRTSP scholar, the student must:

- (1) be enrolled as a regular degree-seeking student at a NOAA CSC;
- (2) have full-time status during the period of the scholarship award. The student must be registered for a minimum of nine (9) semester hours of course work; and,
- (3) have a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.5 for all graduate study

Renewal appointment

GRTSP PhD scholars who maintain the eligibility qualifications may reapply to NOAA EPP/MSI through their CSC for a 2nd year of support. In addition to meeting the criteria for a GRTSP award, scholars must also demonstrate satisfactory progress toward their degree. The crucial factors in final decisions to renew the appointments of GRTSP scholars are also based on the availability of the program financial resources.

ATTACHMENT 1. Project Plan

Project Plan - An identified research training opportunity at NOAA Lab/Facility

Student applicant develops a project plan that is submitted along with the application. It includes:

a) Introduction.

The introduction must include a well-defined problem, a clear statement of the long-term goal(s), and supporting objectives of the proposed project. Summarize the body of knowledge or other past activities that substantiate the need for the proposed project. Describe ongoing or recently completed activities related to the proposed project including the work of key project personnel. Include preliminary data/information pertinent to the proposed work. All works cited should be referenced.

b) Rationale and Significance

- Concisely present the rationale behind the proposed project and how it will advance the current knowledge in the field;
- Clearly describe the specific relationship of the graduate research training project objectives to the NOAA mission and to one or more NOAA strategic plan objectives. The Cooperative Science Center award objectives/thrust area (s) must be specifically identified. Applications that do not address at least one NOAA mission area and strategic plan objective will not be considered;
- Describe how the proposed GRTSP activities will support educational goals and graduate study project activities.

- The Cooperative Science Center award objectives/thrust area (s) must be specifically identified. Applications that do not address at least one NOAA mission area and strategic plan objective will not be considered; and
- Describe how the proposed GRTSP activities will support the scholar's educational goals and graduate study project activities.

c) Approach

- For each Graduate Research and Training Scholar, clearly describe the approaches to be used. Specifically, this section must include:
- A description of the project details proposed and the sequence in which the activities are to be performed;
- Methods to be used in carrying out the proposed project and feasibility of the methods;
- Expected outcomes and outcome measures;
- Means by which results will be analyzed, assessed, or interpreted;
- How results or products will be used;
- Challenges that may be encountered;
- A timeline for attainment of objectives and for production of deliverables that includes annual milestones with specific, measurable outcomes; and,
- A description of evaluating progress toward achieving project objectives must include milestones, which signify the completion of a major deliverable, events, or accomplishment and serve to verify that the project is on schedule and on track for successful conclusion. The plan should also include descriptions of indicators that will be measured to evaluate whether the education/research training activities are successful in achieving project goals and contribute to the achievement of the stated GRTSP program goals and outcomes; and,
- A dissemination plan describing the methods to be used to communicate and share findings and project accomplishments.

Frequently Asked Questions

- *Where do I check to make sure NOAA has received my complete application package?*

The NOAA EPP/MSI Center Director is the first point of contact for all inquiries regarding application packages.

- *What if I miss the deadline date?*

The Office of Education (OED), Educational Partnership Program (EPP) with Minority Serving Institutions (MSI) will not review applications or supporting

materials received after the deadline date. Applications and materials received after the due date will be deemed ineligible.

○ *Who do I contact if I have questions about the application or GRTSP?*

The first point of contact for all questions related to the GRTS program or application is your NOAA CSC Director. If applicants have additional questions about the application or need additional information please contact the GRTSP or Cooperative Science Center Program Manager at GRTSP.EPP@noaa.gov. Please identify the program name when requesting information.

○ *Who is required to sign off on reports?*

The scholar's academic adviser, NOAA mentor(s) and Center Director are all required to sign off on all required reports.

○ *How do I access my travel award?*

Scholars are required to complete a Travel Request form and submit to the Center Director a minimum of three weeks prior to proposed travel date. Once the request is approved by the Center Director the request is then submitted by the CSC Director to NOAA EPP/MSI GRTSP for review and approval.

○ *Are scholars required to co-locate at a NOAA facility as part of this program and what is the minimum duration?*

Yes. All GRTSP scholars are required to spend a pre-determined time period at a NOAA facility engaging in research with a NOAA mentor. Scholars are required to spend a minimum 3 continuous months at a NOAA facility engaged in research with a NOAA mentor.

○ *Will I be notified of selection decisions?*

NOAA EPP will notify the Center Director of selection decisions. The Center Director notifies students of an application's status.

TRAVEL AUTHORIZATION REQUEST

NOAA EPP/MSI

Graduate Research & Training Scholars Program

(Revised 4/15)

NAME OF TRAVELER _____

CELL PHONE # _____

TODAY's DATE _____

OFFICE TELEPHONE # _____

DESTINATION:

From _____ To _____

Return

From _____ To _____

DATES & TIMES:

Begin _____ End _____

PURPOSE: (Check 1)

___ 1 Research/Data Collection

___ 2 Training

___ 3 Conference Attendances

___ 4 To/From Career Work Experience

DESCRIPTION (provide all details of trip):

MODE OF TRANSPORTATION (check all that apply):

____ Personal Vehicle ____ RAIL

____ AIR ____ OTHER, explain_____

REIMBURSABLE EXPENSES:

____ Will you drive your personal vehicle from home/airport or home destination? If so, provide approximate roundtrip mileage:

____ Will you need a shuttle to the Airport? If so, provide cost each way:
\$_____

____ Will you need a Rental car at the destination? If so, provide cost/day:
\$_____

____ Are there any other reimbursable costs? If so, please explain and provide cost:

Name of Hotel _____

Phone No _____

Hotel Address _____

Attach Hotel reservation, car rental reservation, airline reservation, and if applicable conference registration information and abstract with this travel request.



Educational Partnership Program with Minority Serving Institutions

Graduate Research & Training Scholars Program

(Name)

Semi-Annual Report _____ **(Date)**

1. Research Status: Please provide a detailed description on the status of ongoing research. The content of the report must include an abstract and activities, products and outcomes completed over the last 6 months. Be sure to include a **TIMELINE** and completion date in the report. **No more than 5 pages**

Defense Date for Thesis/Dissertation: _____

NOAA Scientist or Manager on defense committee _____

2. Courses for next semester (if any) _____

Attach your current transcript which lists most recent grades with this report.

3. Provide information on research activities undertaken this term and location. Include attachments as needed.

4. Meeting or Conference Call with Academic Advisor and NOAA Mentor held on:

(Date)

Signature _____

Date _____ Phone _____

Academic Advisor Signature _____

Date _____ Phone _____

NOAA Mentor Signature _____

Date _____ Phone _____

Return to: EPP.GRTSP@noaa.gov



Educational Partnership Program Graduate Research & Training Scholars Program

(Name)

Annual Report _____ (Date)

1. Research Status: Please provide a detailed description on the status of research accomplished over the 6 months. The content of the report must include an abstract and activities, products, outcomes, conferences attended and presentations made over the last 6 months. Be sure to include a TIMELINE and completion date in the report.

No more than 10 pages

Defense Date for Thesis/Dissertation: _____

NOAA Scientist or Manager on defense committee: _____

2. Courses for next semester (if any) _____

Attach your current transcript which lists most recent grades with this report.

3. Provide information on research activities undertaken this term and location. Include attachments as needed.

4. Meeting or Conference Call with Academic Advisor and NOAA Mentor held on:

(Date)

Signature _____ Date _____ Phone _____

Academic Advisor Signature _____ Date _____ Phone _____

NOAA Mentor Signature _____ Date _____ Phone _____

Return to: EPP.GRTSP@noaa.gov

